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discovered at Mount Hamilton are always calculated here, but for other comets we must depend, in general, upon orbits and ephemerides computed elsewhere. EDWARD S. HOLDEN.

1896, January 4.

#### NEW EDITION (1895) OF PROFESSOR YOUNG'S BOOK ON THE SUN.

The publishers of the International Scientific Series have issued a new and revised edition of Professor YOUNG's book on the *Sun*, which will be, like its predecessor, indispensable in every astronomical library. E. S. H.

#### PROGRESS OF THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF FRANCE.

The number of members of the Society at the end of each calendar year is given in the table following:

1887, 90 members.	1891, 455 members.
1888, 188    “	1892, 552    “
1889, 288    “	1893, 640    “
1890, 366    “	1894, 742    “
1895, 1133 members.	

The Society is to be congratulated, not only upon its rapid growth, but upon the excellent journal which it issues monthly, the *Bulletin de la Société Astronomique de France*, an octavo of more than 400 pages, well illustrated. E. S. H.

#### NOMENCLATURE OF THE ASTEROIDS, ETC.

It may be interesting to recall a bit of ancient history with regard to the nomenclature of the asteroids, though it is entirely too late to hope for a reform. In the *Astronomical Journal*, vol. i., p. 134 (1850), Dr. GOULD, the editor, has a note upon the discovery of a new planet by HIND. “Mr. HIND has selected the name *Victoria*, with a star surrounded by a laurel wreath for a symbol. Such nomenclature is at variance with established usage,” Dr. GOULD goes on to say, “and is liable to the objections which very properly led astronomers to reject the names *Medicean Stars*, *Georgium Sidus*, *Ceres Ferdinandea*, etc., and even those of the astronomers HERSCHEL and LEVERRIER, for the adoption of whose names some arguments might be adduced.” In the same volume of the *Journal* (page 139), Mr. W. C. BOND, Director of Harvard College Observatory, writes on the same

subject, that "*Victoria* was the daughter of *Pallas*, and one of the attendants of *Jupiter*, and, therefore, the name appears to fulfill the required conditions of a mythological nomenclature." On this Dr. GOULD has a note to the effect that the *Pallas* in question was a "a giant—not the goddess, who is believed to have left no children." In the same volume of the *Journal* (page 151) Mr. HIND prints a letter saying that "the name *Victoria* was submitted to the approbation of astronomers on mythological grounds, and not exclusively as marking the country where the discovery was made. I foresaw the objections which you have advanced, and, therefore, devised a symbol which would apply equally well to *Victoria* or to another name,—*Clio*,—which I had in view in case the general feeling of astronomers was against the latter. . . . I would at once reject any name that is not found in mythology." With this letter the incident ended; the name *Victoria* was, however, adopted, but the rule of choosing a mythological name for newly discovered bodies was apparently more firmly settled than ever. *Victoria* was such a name. There can be no doubt that the rule is a good one.

The Comet IV of 1857 was discovered by Dr. C. H. F. PETERS, at the DUDLEY Observatory, Albany, and was named by him the "OLCOTT-Comet," after one of the trustees. This name was not accepted by the *Journal*, nor by astronomers generally, any more than the name "Comet-TEWFIK," given to the comet discovered at the Egyptian eclipse of 1882 in the presence of the Khedive TEWFIK. The absurdity to which such personal names will lead is well illustrated by an English chart of the Moon, on which one of the craters bears the name "Mrs. JACKSON-GWILT." Several charts of *Mars* also are burdened with personal names, but the elegant and scholarly nomenclature of SCHIAPARELLI'S map, where the names are from ancient geography and history, will undoubtedly prevail.

To return to the asteroids. About 1852, the minor-planets began to be found in such numbers that the invention of separate symbols for them was abandoned, and they were designated by numbers, which signified the order of their discovery, enclosed in circles. Thus, *Victoria* now has for a symbol, (12). The names of the planetoids continued to be chosen from mythology. (67) = *Asia* was discovered by POGSON in Madras. She was one of the *Oceanides*, the wife of *Iapetus* and the mother of *Atlas* and *Pro-metheus*. The name was thus at once conventionally correct and

happily chosen. No one was more happy in choosing such names, in general, than Dr. PETERS, who discovered so many of these bodies. Immediately after returning from the Transit of *Venus* expedition, he discovered two planets,—*Adeona* and *Vibilia*,—in one night. *Adeona* is the patroness of home-coming, and *Vibilia* the patroness of ways—of journeyings. The name of his asteroid *Miriam* (who was the sister of *Moses*) was chosen in defiance of rule, and of malice aforethought; so that he could tell a theological professor, whom he thought to be too pious, that *Miriam*, also, was “a mythological personage.”

*Juewa*, discovered by WATSON in China in 1874, is out of Chinese mythology; and *Freia* (D'ARREST, 1862) and *Frigga* (PETERS, 1862) from Scandinavian. I do not find *Polana* (discovered by PALISA at Pola in 1875) in any mythology, and she probably is an invented patroness of her city, Pola. *Gallia* (HENRY, at Paris, 1875,) is an evident departure from the strict rule. From about this time onward such departures are frequent. *Hilda*, *Bertha*, *Eva*, *Irma*, *Elsa*, *Lamberta*, *Martha*, *Isabella*, *Bianca*, *Stephania*, *Lucia*, *Rosa*, *Henrietta*, *Barbara*, *Carolina*, *Ida*, *Bettina*, *Clementina*, *Mathilde*, *Augusta*, *Huberta*, *Anna*, *Aline*, *Antonia*, *Elvira*, *Paulina*, *Lucretia*,\* *Clorinda*, *Emma*, *Amelia*, *Alice*, *Baptistine*, *Geraldine*, *Dorothea*, *Clarissa*, *Olga*, *Gordonia*, *Margarita*, *Goberta*, *Katharina*, *Chicago*, etc., (all adopted names of asteroids), may, some of them, have a right in a list of heavenly bodies, but many of them, at least, read like the Christian names in a girls' school.

No doubt the departure from a strictly classical nomenclature has gone too far to be corrected now, but there is no question the departure is, on the whole, to be regretted; and, although the matter of nomenclature is a minor one, it is worth while to keep it as impersonal as possible in the future. The abuses to which a contrary course might lead are only too evident.

E. S. H.

#### LICK OBSERVATORY EXPEDITION TO OBSERVE THE TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE OF AUGUST, 1896, IN JAPAN.

An expedition to observe the total solar eclipse of August, 1896, will be sent from the LICK Observatory, under the direction of Professor J. M. SCHAEBERLE. The expedition has been

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\* Named in honor of LUCRETIA CAROLINE HERSCHEL.